

**EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
November 4, 2008**

On Tuesday, November 4, 2008, the Edgefield County Council held its regular monthly meeting at 6:00 P. M. in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield.

**Members present**

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman  
Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman  
Joel D. Hudson, Councilman  
B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

**Members absent**

Norman Dorn, Councilman

**Others present**

John W. Pettigrew, Jr., County Administrator  
Lynn W. Strom, Finance/Budget Manager  
Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council  
and others as per list attached

**Others absent**

John F. Byrd, Jr., County Attorney

Chairman Kneece called the meeting to order and the invocation was given by Councilman Hudson. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

Motion was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Hudson, to approve the November 4, 2008, Edgefield County Council Agenda, as amended, to include Audit Report presentation by Ms. Laurie Smith, CPA with Elliott, Davis, LLC. Motion carried unanimously.

**Minutes**

The motion to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2008, Edgefield County Council meeting, as presented, was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Hudson. Motion carried unanimously.

**Reports**

No comments.

**Ordinances**

First reading of Ordinance No. 08-09-604, "An Ordinance Amending Edgefield County Ordinance Number 07-08-596, an Ordinance Providing for the FY 08-09 General Operating Budget, to Reduce Revenues and Expenses Provided for in the FY 08-09

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Budget”, carried unanimously with a motion made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Bright.

First reading of Ordinance No. 08-09-601, “An Ordinance Providing for a Lease and Agreement between Edgefield County and Western Carolina Aviators, LLC, for Approximately One Acre of Land with Improvements Consisting of a Metal Aircraft Hangar Building Located at the Trenton Airport” carried unanimously with a motion made by Councilman Kitchens, seconded by Councilman Bright.

Prior to the first reading, the issue of insurance for the airport was discussed. Both parties (Plane Fun and the County) carry insurance. The question: “Is it necessary for both to carry insurance and what type coverage?” Council instructed the administrator to obtain all information on insurance from both parties by the December meeting.

Second reading of Ordinance No. 08-09-602, “An Ordinance to Restrict the Use of All Tobacco Products at All Edgefield County Owned or Leased Recreation Facilities” carried unanimously with a motion made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Hudson.

**No Resolutions.**

**New Business**

**Post 30**

Mr. Matt McGinnis, Commander of Edgefield American Legion Post 30, thanked council for their financial support at a very critical time. Mr. McGinnis stated that the Legion’s Board had previously approached council asking for a favor to help them with a financial shortfall. Specifically, the insurance on the building was ready to expire. They have done the best they could over the years to keep the building in good shape but without council’s assistance they could not have made it through a bad time. At the present they are in pretty good financial shape, the town was gracious enough to donate the proceeds from the Heritage Jubilee to Post 30 this year. In addition, the Legion has done its own fundraisers trying to raise money. Mr. McGinnis wanted to publicly express his appreciation to each council member and presented each member a certificate of appreciation.

**Annual Audit Report**

Ms. Laurie Smith, CPA, with Elliott, Davis, LLC, presented the annual audit for FY 07-08. She briefly highlighted some of the areas of the audit and stated that the county is in good financial shape. She presented an unqualified opinion on the financial statement.

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**Old Business**

*A Petition for Closure* of a portion of Odell Adams Road in the northern section of the county was presented to council at the October meeting. Councilman Hudson asked that before a deciding vote was taken he asked that every property owner, not just abutting owners, to be notified. Certified letters were mailed and several property owners did oppose the closing. Ms. Jennifer Sumner and Greg Anderson, Attorneys for Brad Thompson the property owner, petitioned for the closure.

Two citizens were present at the November meeting, Charlie Doolittle and William Whitmer, to address council concerning the closing of this road. Mr. Whitmer represented his mother. Councilman Kitchens asked him to explain to council why he objected to the closing of the Odell Adams Road. Mr. Kitchens stated that what council understands no one owns property on that section of the road that is being considered for closure.

Mr. Whitmer said that his mother, Barbara Whitmer and his aunt, Betty Doolittle live there and have lived there all of their lives. The people that want it closed and the people that are not against the closing don't live anywhere in Edgefield. They own land in Edgefield and do not live there. I live there at the road and my uncle and aunt and mother and daddy. We have used that road all of our lives to cut through the country, etc. You are listening to one man's opinion to close the road but you have others not wanting to close it.

Councilman Kitchens asked about the condition of the bridge and the reply was "passable." There are actually two bridges: one is a culvert and the other is a wooden bridge. William said he understands Mr. Thompson is planning to take up the wooden bridge and closing the other end which would be no pass-thru to the next road and maybe putting in a cul-de-sac. Harvey Holmes owns up to that bridge and I don't know if anyone has spoken with him but as you well know if you have a cul-de-sac in the middle other woods you are asking for trouble – asking to have things dumped. Maybe the others have not thought about that.

Charlie Doolittle spoke at this time stating that several of them in the community go through there with farm equipment such as hay balers, etc. to get to other fields to avoid Highway 378 with the farm equipment because of so many eighteen wheelers.

We know Mr. Pettigrew has mentioned that it is the judge's decision and we feel sure that the judge will weigh your (council's) decision.

Chairman Kneece informed the citizens that one thing that has to be taken into consideration is the bridge situation. When it is no longer passable then that road will

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have to be closed because the “C” funds are not obligating any money for bridges or for anything right now.

William Whitmer explained another point about the wooden bridge. The one bridge that is actually closer to the highway is the one with the culvert (used to be an old wooden bridge). The other one is a very small – you could do away with the bridge and put in a culvert so it would not be a big expense to the county once the bridge does go out.

Chairman Kneece made a motion to recommend that the road not be closed and turn it over to the court with our recommendation that the road stays open. We answer with the words that County Council of Edgefield County recommends that the road stay open and turn it over to the court. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hudson and the motion carried unanimously.

**Administrator’s Report**

Our election commission and workers of the Voter Registration office have been very busy for the last few weeks. There have been over 3,000 citizens voting absentee ballots. So far it has been a good election – good participation throughout the county. He thanked all of the poll workers and everyone on the commission that worked so hard to bring that about this year.

The county’s delinquent tax sale will be Monday, December 1st, 10:00 am in the courtroom. The advertisements for all of the delinquent properties will be in the newspapers tomorrow and will run for the next two weeks. We have about the same number as we had last year and hopefully most of the taxes will be paid by the deadline which is November 26<sup>th</sup>. Historically there are some citizens that wait until the very end to pay their taxes.

Recreation report. There are two more weeks of football and soccer and basketball sign-up will begin next week.

After the Administrator’s report, Councilman Kitchens asked the status of the insurance funds from the Neighborhood fire and if there are any plans for building another building. The administrator stated that council had voted to extend that option until December 31<sup>st</sup>. The chairman stated then it will be decided as to what to do about building a new building. We will not lose the insurance money because we have six months from the time we start so we have plenty of time to collect the insurance money. We will have to do something after the time runs out on the option. We understand the mortgages are still on the property.

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**Mr. Mark DuPont** signed to address council concerning the airport hangar lease. He felt council had been misled about a lot of things about airport hangars and he would like to clear some of it up.

Eighteen and a half years ago when he arrived at the Edgefield County Airport there was one person on the airport – that was John Moore. The airport was being maintained by the SC Aeronautics Commission, mowing the lawn (includes the entire airport-fence to fence). I could turn off the runway at any point and taxi to my hangar. The runways were lighted and the lights were paid by the Edgefield County Airport Commission. When the EC Airport Commission lost funding Dick Murphy began paying for the lights and that allowed us to use the airport at night. Since that time the airport has deteriorated considerably – we no longer have lights at the airport. It is now a poorly mowed pasture. We had a twenty-five (25) year lease on the building and at the end of that twenty five year lease the building was to be transferred to Edgefield County ownership.

We fully expected that we would be allowed to continue to operate and maintain our hangars in that building for some reasonable lease or rent. For an example of what would be a reasonable in other counties, I talked with the airport commissioners in Barnwell County and when someone builds a building and at the end of their twenty-five year lease they continue to lease it to the original builder for a \$1.00 a year.

I have rented hangars at other grass strips with no lights and I paid \$50 a month. I did not have to mow the lawn, did not have to maintain insurance and I did not have to maintain the hangar (s). I was a tenant. At this point I will be a tenant in this hangar. We negotiated with Mr. Pettigrew that we would have a rent somewhat higher than the \$50 and \$75 seemed like a reasonable amount and at that point there was some discussion that we would continue to maintain the property and even mow the lawn around the hangar. Now, there is discussion of maybe having us pay for insurance as well even though we all carry insurance on our aircraft. Aiken County Airport and Barnwell County Airport hangar space rents for \$120 a month. The \$120 includes many, many more amenities: paved runways, lights, weather reporting, fueling of plane in the hangar, pilot lounge, computer terminals.

We purchased from the original builders (Voigt Corley with Southeastern Helicopters). When we moved onto the airport we were tenants, now we are going to be paying rent. The \$75 is high but fair - \$100 a month is getting unreasonable and then tacking additional charges on top of it which I think council has been misled what an airport is supposed to be.

I have not actually seen the new lease recently – the last time I saw it was in Mr. Pettigrew's office and it was for \$75 a month, a twenty one year lease that could be

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parallel to Plane Fun's and we would not have to deal with Plane Fun. We would deal directly with Edgefield County, as our original pre-existing lease was with Edgefield County and we would like to continue in that line. I understand the new lease is for five years.

**Linda Anderson** also addressed council concerning the airport lease. "When Johnny got the original lease fourteen years ago, he went out and, I beg to differ with you about the airport and the condition of it. You all have seen letters telling you what kind of shape it was in when Johnny took it over. He went there because like these other people, he had a desire to fly and to enjoy it. He wanted to share that with everybody else.

Now, Mark is correct. There are other airports that are larger, much better and have more facilities, but there isn't probably one other airport in the state of South Carolina that is solely funded by a business that is on there. That is why the business is there, because somebody has to maintain the airport to have people there, to have people experience it to be able to enjoy it and to bring in revenue. The only way of bringing in revenue is to build hangars. We have built three hangars, we purchased Voigt Corley's old hangar (renovated) and we bought the Civil Air Patrol building and renovated it.

When we first started our original lease it stated that we would build hangars to rent, have flying lessons, and there was no mention of doing anything other than cutting the grass. When the new lease was instituted (even before that) Johnny has managed that airport at no salary. There isn't another county airport in South Carolina (or maybe anywhere else) that you don't have to pay somebody at least on a part-time basis to manage an airport. It isn't just the matter of cutting grass or a strip. When the new lease came in and every time we turned around there was more and more expense, more and more constraints, more responsibility were placed on us to keep the airport running. That airport has been there for almost sixty five years. It was donated to this county to be used as an airport.

Several years ago when Mr. Adams decided there were other things needed concerning the airport and the county would no longer pay for the lights, they would no longer be responsible for maintaining the liability. Several years after that, because of budget cuts in aviation, the FAA would no longer cut the grass and no longer cut or maintain the runway. That has to be done by someone. Who do you think pays for the equipment, maintenance of the equipment, fuel to run that equipment, except Plane Fun? I think the misconception here is that Plane Fun is making tons of money, which they are not. Plane Fun is simply sharing the experience with everybody else generating income to pay for these expenses. Every single year just about we have lost money. There has not been any huge amount of money, there is no salary paid. But yet, the management is there. Every time forms come in, as Mr. Pettigrew can tell you, it is Johnny and myself that have to

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meet with the FAA to coordinate things and try to generate a good relationship. When Johnny first obtained the lease the relationship with the FAA was terrible. He spent years rebuilding that relationship with the FAA in Columbia because of the condition of that airport.

Johnny could have purchased the hangar from Voigt Corley and he could have had his own private place to fly. At some point the airport would have been gone because no one was putting money into it. Nobody was building it. Johnny has now built three hangars that will hold twenty four airplanes. You know the goodwill that has been generated and it is considered one of the friendliest airports in the southeast.

We are not trying to gouge anybody. Our tenants now are paying anywhere from \$100-\$140 a month for the hangars. That is \$.17 per square foot. If you figure their hangars they are only going to pay \$.07 a square foot. If they had to pay \$.17 a sq. ft. it would cost them \$214.20 per month per person which would be \$642.60 instead of \$300.00. We want to keep the airport going, maintained. All of the money I get goes back into the airport. All of the present tenants do not complain about what they are paying. The size hangars that they (Western Carolina Aviators) have, if they want to get out someone has stated they will be glad to pay \$160 for the hangar. Johnny said he wants to keep them there but they should pay their share.

**Claims approved:**

**PAYROLL: 9/22/08 thru 10/5/08**

Regular.....\$227,117.92

**PAYROLL: 10/6/08 thru 10/16/08**

Regular.....\$224,849.59

**PAYROLL: 10/20/08 thru 11/2/08**

Regular.....\$221,414.54

**General Operating.....\$939,066.56**

There being no further business, Councilman Bright made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Kitchens. Motion carried unanimously. The next regular scheduled council meeting will be held Tuesday, December 2, 2008.

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Norman Dorn, Councilman

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Joel D. Hudson, Councilman

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B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

ATTEST

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Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council

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